

Francis Preston Blair to Andrew Jackson, April 26, 1839, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

class=MsoNormal>FRANCIS P. BLAIR TO JACKSON.

Washington, April 26, 1839.

My Dear General: I send you by this mail an envelope full of explanations, with a view to get your deposition in a suit brought by Rob. Mayo against me for a libel. 1 In my strictures on Mr. Adams's attack on you, growing out of your letter to Mr. Fulton about Texas, I said that the original letter in your hand writing must have been "purloined". If you will look to the extracts of the declaration I send in the large letter, you will be able to recur to the articles in the Globe and understand the whole matter. After you had read those articles you wrote me that you had no doubt Mayo stole the letter. I was exceedingly cautious not to lay

1 See p. 2, ante.

class=MsoNormal>0035 11 myself open to any just ground of suit, for I knew that the needy wretch who had been just turned out of Office on my written request, would do any thing to get a pittance and that the Whig Jurors of this city with their old dotard Judges to back them would give a verdict for any amount to revenge their party on me, although they despise Mayo. My object, as you will see by my pieces, was to make the issue with Adams and not with Mayo.

I was unwilling to have any thing to do with the dirty tool of the Ex president or bring your name in contact with his, and indeed, I do not think when my first articles were written, that I knew that Mayo had any hand in providing the letter. However that may

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have been, it is now necessary that I should prove the fact as it is viz. that Mayo did not come by it honestly. For this purpose I must trouble you, dear General, to respond to the interrogations transmitted by this mail (observing the formula sent in the large letter very particularly, for the court will lay hold of the slightest technicality to exclude the deposition) and as Major Donelson and Andrew had access alone to your private papers, it would probably be well to frame an Interrogatory so as to bring out proof from them that neither of them gave the letter to Mayo. He will probably get old Adams to swear that he told him that the letter was given him by the Major or Andrew. Old Adams is here and Cox and Brent are the Lawyers engaged in this business against me. As Mayo is penniless and despised, I have no doubt that some party purpose is at the bottom of the proceeding: I have employed Key 2 and will make him fully acquainted with the merits of Adams's base attack on you which never has been answered in Congress. Key shall elucidate the whole baseness of his conduct towards you in the trial of my cause and shew him off and his man Mayo, as the two offenders who deserve the execration of the country. I will have Key's speech reported and printed.

2 Francis Scott Key.

We are all well. The President and his cabinet gone to Baltimore to the funeral of your old friend Genl. Smith. 3 He died at 87, and as quietly as if a watch, run down. He kept good time until the full length of his chain run out and then he stopped. He laid down to rest after riding out and his well worn frame will never be again called into exertion in this world. He was fortunate in his life and in his death. . . .

3 Gen. Samuel Smith, long a senator from Maryland. See Benton, *Thirty Years's View*, II. 176.